

United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
AREA OFFICE COLORADO-UTAH  
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SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH 84138

IN REPLY REFER TO:

June 9, 1980

MEMORANDUM

To: Regional Director (ENV)  
Denver, Colorado

From: Area Manager, Area 5  
Salt Lake City, Utah

Subject: Mitigation - Closed Basin Project

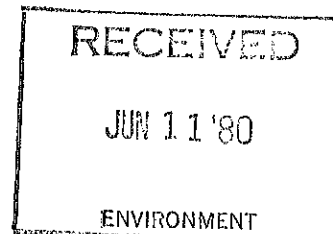
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WPRS Amarillo Office has called for a meeting on June 10 in Denver to discuss waterfowl mitigation for the Closed Basin Project. As a result of this meeting I have contacted several people to discuss a potential change in the waterfowl mitigation program. In addition to talking with you, I've had discussions with Jack Grieb and Pete Barrows of the Colorado DOW, Jerry Wilson, and Mel Nail, Manager of the Alamosa-Monte Vista Refuge complex. All generally agreed that the Myshak lake area is not necessarily as palatable as a National Wildlife refuge as it was some 25 years ago when first proposed. We have, however, made some commitments for acquisition of a part of Myshak as is currently found in the Project's environmental impact statement.

At the June 10 meeting Bob Jacobsen and other Area personnel along with Colorado Division of Wildlife people will throw out a new concept for mitigation which will include (1) the possibility of acquiring only the Myshak Lakes area or about 3,500 acres to be managed somewhat like a wetland production area with no staffing or major developments; (2) to mitigate waterfowl losses by the conveyance of water by WPRS through various canals and other systems to the Monte Vista Refuge (first priority) or Alamosa Refuge, (second priority), to offset pumping costs since the actual flows at Monte Vista have long time ceased. Operating costs at Monte Vista are becoming more unrealistic each year to continue maintenance of waterfowl habitat. The thought here is that it is better to have two relatively good waterfowl areas such as Alamosa-Monte Vista rather than to have three mediocre or less area which would include Myshak. Additionally, I understand that the water supply for Myshak is now considered less certain than it was a few years ago. It appears pumping from wells will be required which involves costly O&M overhead and the use of scarce energy, and (3) mitigate the Closed Basin area by purchase of Russell Lake's habitat in lieu of Myshak Lake habitat. Russell Lakes are located adjacent to the Weatherill property which is under option for purchase as a waterfowl area by Colorado Division of Wildlife. If a portion or all of Russell Lakes is required, it could be managed as a unit by the State.



-2-

Actually, the last option of acquiring Russell Lake habitat coupled with receipt of additional water at Monte Vista would be most beneficial to the waterfowl resource. Mr. Grieb and I both favor this approach if it can be worked out.

If our proposal is feasibly accepted by WPRS at the June 10 meeting, then respective FWS and DOW people will regroup to work out a new mitigation package.

I have also learned that BLM will probably participate at the meeting and will request 300 or 400 acre-feet of mitigation water for their use at their Dry Lakes waterfowl area. Dry Lakes is a 1,000 acre or smaller waterfowl site and should probably receive low priority and consideration to the above-mentioned proposals.

*Robert H. Shilge*

cc: AW  
ARD (Refuges & Wildlife)  
AE  
CFO  
Refuge Manager, Alamosa-Monte Vista NWR